



Epilepsy Facts and Figures

To understand Epilepsy more it is good to know the scale of the problem and who is affected so we have detailed some facts on this condition from the data from the Joint Epilepsy Council. Epilepsy can affect anyone of any age in any walk of life and there are over 40 different types of Epilepsy consisting of at least 29 syndromes. An individual can have more than one type of seizure type. There are approximately 60% of people with tonic clonic seizures, 20% have complex partial, 12% mixed tonic clonic/complex, 3% simple partial and less than 5% absence seizures, myoclonic seizures and other types. Around 3% of people have photosensitive epilepsy.

There are around 600,000 people in the UK who are taking anti-epileptic drugs, which is about 1 in 103 people or 0.97% of the population so it is a serious condition. Worldwide it is estimated that there are about 50 million people who have the condition, 80% are in developing countries and 75% of these are not receiving appropriate treatment.

Some more facts, in the UK, 70% of the population with epilepsy could be seizure free with optimal treatment but currently only 52% of the population of people with epilepsy are seizure free. This 18% treatment gap equates to 108,000 people with epilepsy having seizures when with optimal treatment they could be seizure free.

In the UK 1,150 people died of epilepsy related causes in 2009, made of 644 males and 506 females. In England and Wales 110 or 11% of those deaths are young adults or children under the age of 25. Approximately 42% or 480 of the deaths per year are probably or potentially avoidable.

Sudden unexpected death in epilepsy (SUDEP) is defined as the sudden, unexpected, witnessed or unwitnessed, non-traumatic and non-drowning death in patients with epilepsy, with or without evidence for a seizure, with exclusion of documented status epilepticus, and when post-mortem examination does not reveal a structural or toxicological cause for death.

SUDEP accounts for approximately half of all epilepsy related deaths. Life expectancy is reduced by up to 10 years for people with symptomatic epilepsy and up to 2 years for idiopathic epilepsy. Reductions in life expectancy are highest at the time of diagnosis and diminish with time.

Information from the Joint Epilepsy Council see www.jointepilepsycouncil.org.uk